

Spark Gap

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From the President....

Ernest Clark, KB9SKI, President, MARC



The big news of the last month is the IRS reply to our club application for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt recognition. The word was not too good. Essentially, (c)(3) groups are designed for

exclusively educational, public-service, religious, or a couple of other good, good aims. The key word there is “exclusively”, and the IRS takes that to mean 100%. The application is very extensive (I sent in about 40 pages of forms, descriptions, inventory lists, detailed income and expenditures for the last 3 years, etc.), and there is significant evidence there that MARC is not 100% educational/public service. We —> spend money <— on a club picnic, we —> spend money <— on memorials for deceased members, we —> devote a whole paragraph to the Supper Club in our general operations description <—, and so forth. There’s just too much obviously social activity in official club business (or what’s presented as official club business) for us to qualify for 100%.

A letter from the IRS (dated February 28, arriving in the club mailbox sometime between March 11 and Saturday the 19th) pointed this out. Groups that have a social welfare/public service focus that can include some social activity qualify for 501(c)(4) status rather than the 501(c)(3) that we applied for. The letter suggested that we modify our application to one for 501(c)(4) status, and included the appropriate Form 1024. It also gave a Wednesday, March 23 deadline for our reply, threatening to close our case with prejudice (losing our \$150 application fee) if there was no good-faith re-

sponse by the deadline.

I spent a rough weekend looking at the form, at the law, at the earlier application, and talking with various club officers. The IRS is right; MARC as we currently do it is not 501(c)(3)-eligible. Since the choices boiled down to do nothing and forfeit the \$150 or apply for 501(c)(4) status and at least get something, I sent a 30-page application off and it arrived on the 23rd. As I said, a rough weekend.

“IRS Application News”

In all likelihood we should get the (c)(4) status. This is not as good as (c)(3) status. Donations to the club will not be tax-deductible. This is a major hit; the entire category of donations that we were hoping to make MARC eligible for go to (c)(3), only, groups. As an extreme what-if,

what if we could get, say, \$20,000 from Homeland Security to buy land and put up a decent, independent tower for the Johnson County RACES and ARES repeater? This kind of money isn’t going to a social group. (c)(4) is still better than nothing; we get tax exemption, get non-profit mailing rates, and all the benefits of incorporation remain.

At some time in the future we might want to convert from (c)(4) to (c)(3). I don’t know what that would entail, whether that would involve only cosmetic or substantial changes in MARC operation, or whether it would mean changing MARC into something that’s not an improvement. That’s a topic for future discussion.

—73, KB9SKI

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Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club*



Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
P. O. Box 835
Franklin, IN 46131
www.midstatehams.org

This is a Drill! ARES Supporting Red Cross Participation in TOPOFF3...from the ARRL April 2005

NEWINGTON, CT, Apr 4, 2005—*There's been an explosion in New London! The drill is on! The drill is on!* Those words via a VHF tactical net shortly before 1:30 PM local time April 4



Chris Poss, KB1FUO, explains the APRS setup to Emil Soderberg, KB1KMW, a staging area volunteer.

Officers

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KB9SKI

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alerted Connecticut Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) volunteers that TOPOFF 3 was under way there. Connecticut ARRL Section officials and ARES members have been preparing for the congressionally mandated exercise for about a year. The TOPOFF 3 scenario depicts a complex terror-

ist campaign that began earlier in the day in New Jersey—the other state serving at a TOPOFF3 site—with an apparent biological attack and eventually expands to an international scale. Some 150 ARES members from Connecticut and other states in the Northeast are on hand to support the American Red Cross, which has the main responsibility for mass care under the National Disaster Plan. ARRL Connecticut Section Emergency Coordinator Chuck Rexroad, AB1CR, says part of the drill is to expect the unexpected.

“Anything can happen,” said Rexroad, who—along with ARRL Connecticut Section Manager Betsey Doane, K1EIC—was among those staffing an ARES marshaling or staging area at the Chesterfield Fire Station, not far from New London. “They have what they call ‘red cards’ that can inject something unexpected into the drill,” Rexroad continued. “They could tell us this building just went away that we’re sitting in, and all the equipment is gone. We’d have to go somewhere else and start over.”

Doane explained that such surprises may involve personnel as well. “Somebody might come up to one of us and say, ‘You just broke your leg,’ and we have to react to that.”

Something unanticipated really did happen as activity was ramping up. With the Connecticut phase of the drill set to start in about an hour, a crucial VHF repeater went down. A backup soon was on its way to the site. Rexroad says a lot of redundancy was built in during the planning stages. “Every piece of equipment

has at least one backup, and most of them have two, because a lot of the equipment here is somewhat optional,” Rexroad explained. The volunteers at the staging area had set up equipment for HF through UHF and included provisions for packet and APRS. Volunteers provided their own mobile transceivers and antennas for deployment to provide communication for Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs).

Rexroad says extensive training—including the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications courses—in the months and weeks leading up to TOPOFF3 has already paid off. “The Level 1 training is especially helpful, because it gives everyone a common base to work from,” he said.

Sponsored by the US Department of Homeland Security and intended as a realistic test of the nation’s homeland security system, TOPOFF3’s goal is to push the system of first responders beyond their limits. Doane pointed out that participants don’t have all the details. “It’s like an emergency, but it’s unlike an emergency,” she said, “because we have to plan, because we’re being evaluated on this drill.”

Rexroad and his crew at the staging site installed an HF dipole, and ARES plans to employ NTS HF circuits to send traffic to national Red Cross officials as well as to other ARRL Field Organization Personnel.

By late Monday, several hours into the drill, Rexroad reported that some 45 ARES volunteers had been deployed to the field to support the Red Cross. “We are their only communications,” he noted.

More info at

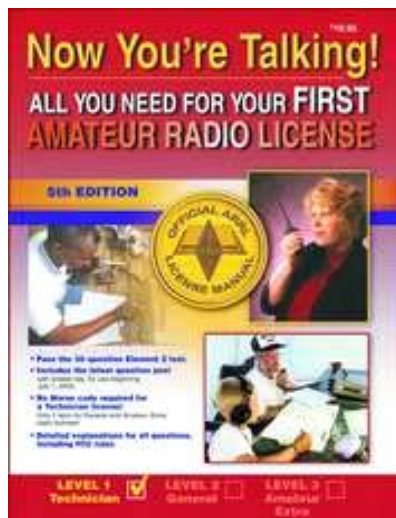
www.ARRL.org

New MARC Member

It is with great pleasure we announce a new member of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club.

KF9SQ, Rick Abshier

Welcome!



Now You're Talking Technician Classes Continue

Technician classes continue at the Greenwood Public Library. Classes are scheduled for April 2, April 9, April 16, April 23, April 30, May 7 and May 14th.

On Saturday May 21st our Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VECs) will be at the Library to administer the test to those who feel ready to do so. It's not too late to join in both as a student or if already a licensee to show support for the class and be available to answer questions students may have. ■

Weather Spotter Class

Weather Spotter classes were held on March 30th at our meeting location at 1111 Hospital Road, in Franklin. The class was very well attended and we were all treated to a new and very interesting presentation that included many video shots of severe weather and/or tornados. Attending classes annually keeps us up-to-date with new technology, reminds us of the information requested reported by the National Weather Service (NWS) and also gives us extra credibility in that the NWS is made aware that we have attended the annual class.

A number of MARC members attended the class. Good show! ■

Club Dues for 2005

Club dues are now due for 2005. Please see the club treasurer, Brenda Haler, KC9EBL, at the next meeting and pay your club dues at that time. Full member dues are \$18.00 per year for membership in MARC.

Full members are those who have a valid amateur radio license. Full members may vote and hold office. Associate members are those who are licensed and/or unlicensed without the privilege of voting and/or holding license. Associate member dues are \$10.00 per year.

If you haven't yet paid your dues, please consider doing so at our next meeting. Your support of MARC is greatly appreciated. ■

Benefits of Membership

Membership in the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club has many benefits. Some of them include:

Autopatch Access. The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club repeater has an autopatch, allowing members to place personal calls via the repeater.

Monthly Newsletter. The Spark Gap, our monthly newsletter, will help keep you informed of the latest club and amateur radio related news.

Activities. Each month, our activities director arranges a special guest or demonstration. These give members first hand access to some of the newest and most exciting facets of amateur radio. Additionally, our special events give you the perfect chance to get out and enjoy the hobby with other operators, and help the public at the same time!

Help and Support. The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club's members are very diverse, and bring a vast amount of knowledge with them to every meeting. Whether fixing an antenna or considering a new rig, you will find the experience of our group an invaluable asset. ■

Reminder:

Just a reminder that Mike Palmer, N9FEB, is still looking for volunteers to work the 500 Mini Marathon and the 500 Festival Parade. To volunteer or for more information, contact Mike at www.IndyHams.org or give him a call at 317.849.3602.

WA9RDF

Repeater

146.835/

146.235 MHz

151.4 Hz PL

Tone

Weekly Net

Every Sunday

at 7PM EST

Tune in to hear

the ARRL

Newsline!

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time.

This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills.

Newsline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby.

For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to

netcontrol@midstatehams.org, and we will record your check-in!



Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club

P. O. Box 835

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www.midstatehams.org

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Spark Gap

2005 Schedule of Events

April

- 2 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN
- 2 Columbus Hamfest**
4-H Fairgrounds, Community Building, Columbus, IN
- 2 IRCC Spring 2005 Meeting**
Hamilton County Emergency Management Office, Noblesville, IN
- 9 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN
- 16 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
- 16 Mini-Marathon Coordination Meeting for Volunteers**
Red Cross Headquarters, Indianapolis, IN
- 23 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN
- 23 Mini-Marathon Pre-Race Event**
Indianapolis, IN
- 30 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN

May

- 7 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN
- 7 Indianapolis 500 Mini-Marathon**
Indianapolis, IN
- 14 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN
- 20-22 Dayton Hamvention**
Dayton, OH
- 21 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
- 28 Indianapolis 500 Festival Parade**
Indianapolis, IN

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.